



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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**WILLAPA HILLS ELK HERD PLAN
ADDENDUM 14-073 TO FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT (SEIS)
DATED: SEPTEMBER 5, 2008**

Name of SEIS: 08-078 GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN JULY 2009-JUNE 2015

Description of SEIS: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has published a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled, 2009-2015 Game Management Plan. Changes to the 2003-09 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are proposed to update the plan for 2009-15. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

Significant new issues include: hunting near urbanizing areas; improved communications and outreach by the department; re-introduction of antelope; and wolf re-colonization. These new issues with corresponding objectives and strategies have been added to the original 2003-09 issues. Many of the original issues have been updated or modified based on new information and research, changing priorities, or emphasis.

Proponent: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Location of Project or Action: Statewide. Addended Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan is located in southwest Washington.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

WDFW is providing updated information on this project which may be of interest to other agencies or the public. The updated information provided below does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing SEIS.

The original SEIS dated September 5, 2008, should be modified to include the following additional information:

Washington State Elk Herd Plan for the Willapa Hills Elk Herd, September 2014

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently developing or updating management plans for each of the ten elk (*Cervus elaphus*) herds in the state. Elk herd plans specifically address the unique conservation challenges that face each herd. Elk herd plans come under the overall management guidance of the current Game Management Plan. The Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan is subject to amendment and will be updated, reevaluated, amended, and extended as new information becomes available.

The Willapa Hills elk herd is one of ten herds identified in Washington State. The Willapa Hills elk herd area is approximately 1.7 million acres in size. This herd is an important resource that provides many ecological, recreational, aesthetic, cultural, and economic benefits. Current distribution of the Willapa Hills elk herd is consistent with its historical range; however, localized changes in elk use and movements have occurred.

The purpose of the Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan is to provide direction for managing the Willapa Hills elk herd. Specifically, it will serve as a valuable reference document and will provide management guidelines for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tribes, agency cooperators, landowners, and the public. Priority management activities will be carried out as funding and resources are available.

The Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan consists of three primary management goals: (1) preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage elk and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations; (2) manage elk for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, subsistence, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography; (3) manage elk populations for a sustainable annual harvest.

This plan identifies management priorities that need to be addressed to effectively manage the Willapa Hills elk herd and achieve the three primary management goals. It also identifies management objectives and a variety of strategies to address each priority. WDFW will work collaboratively with Treaty Tribes, other governmental entities and the public to achieve those objectives.

Based on the original SEIS and the updated information provided in this addendum, the WDFW has determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted.

Location of Documents: The SEIS, 2009-2015 Game Management Plan, and Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan are available to be read during business hours at the WDFW headquarters office in Olympia (Wildlife Management Program, 5th Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE). Alternatively, they can be obtained by calling WDFW Wildlife Program at (360) 902-2515 or downloaded from the WDFW website at the following addresses: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00434> (SEIS), <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00433/> (Game Management Plan), and http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html (all three documents).

The first draft of the Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan was released on May 5, 2014, for a 30-day public review period. On the same date, WDFW released a news release to all Washington print, radio, and television media outlets. In addition, public meetings were held on May 13, 2014, in Montesano and May 15, 2014, in Longview where the draft plan was reviewed with members of the public and comments were solicited. The draft plan was posted on the WDFW website on May 5, 2014, for the entire 30-day comment period. Comments were received and addressed. Changes were made to the plan based on the comments received. The proposed implementation date of the Willapa Hills Elk Herd Plan is October 2014. The plan will remain functional until new developments warrant a revision or update.

This Addendum is issued under WAC 197-11-600(c). We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date of issue below. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **5:00 pm on October 24, 2014.**

Method of Comment:

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at:
http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

If you have questions about this addendum or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: October 9, 2014

SIGNATURE:



SEPA Log Number: 14-073add (Addendum to Game Management Plan SEIS, September 5, 2008)